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Interesting Novelties;

From Books published within the last Six Weeks.



FELIX HARBOUR, BOOTHIA.
From Captain Sir John Ross' Second Voyage.

Voyages and Travels.

NARRATIVE OF A SECOND VOYAGE IN SEARCH
OF A NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

By Captain Sir John Ross, &c.
(Continued from page 317.)

[We resume our extracts with the prefixed Engraving, by the prompt courtesy of the publisher; and our last quotation is the best accompaniment for this extraordinary scene; especially as its main details have appeared in this Miscellany.* Its date is Christmas-day, 1829. Here the party were "provided with a winter home, with all, indeed, that their own homes could have furnished, in the wreck and stores of the *Fury*."

The new year commenced with serene and mild weather, though the thermometer was at minus 16°, falling afterwards to 22°. The meridian sky displayed the beautiful tints of a summer evening, but of a character different from any thing occurring in more southern climates: the distant hills on the horizon being of a nearly scarlet hue, while a glowing purple sky above, gradually darkened into a shade deeper than an analogous twilight would produce in England. This second holiday of Christmas was celebrated by the men getting up a concert of about the same quality as their Christmas ball. In the night of January 1, the thermometer changed much within a few hours; and on cutting through the ice, it was found to be five feet four inches thick, giving an increase of nearly three feet during the previous month. On January 5, hares appeared in numbers, and one was shot; a circumstance worth noticing, because, in former expeditions, they had never been found so late in the season as January. The fabrication of a snow staircase, with a wall, found useful employment as well as amusement for the men, who had learned to pride themselves in the beauty and perfection of their icy architecture. On January 7, a brilliant sky at ten in the morning, presented an entirely new aspect; the space above the setting moon being of a rich, golden colour, and that near the sun's place displaying a bright, silvery tint; both the reverse of what is usual in other climates. At length, this monotonous life was relieved by more important appearances, proving even these dreary regions of creation to have their lords. Captain Ross writes:—]

Natives of Boothia Felix.

Jan. 9.—Going on shore this morning, one of the seamen informed me that strangers were seen from the observatory. I proceeded accordingly in the direction pointed out, and soon saw four Esquimaux near a small iceberg, not far from the land, and about a mile from the ship. They retreated behind it as

soon as they perceived me; but as I approached, the whole party came suddenly out of their shelter, forming in a body of ten in front and three deep, with one man detached, on the land side, who was apparently sitting in a sledge. I therefore sent back my companion for Commander Ross to join me, together with some men, who were directed to keep at a distance behind him. Proceeding then alone, to within a hundred yards, I found that each was armed with a spear and a knife, but saw no bows and arrows.

Knowing that the word of salutation between meeting tribes was *Tima tima*, I hailed them in their own language, and was answered by a general shout of the same kind; the detached man being then called in front of their line. The rest of my party now coming up, we advanced to within sixty yards, and then threw our guns away, with the cry of *Aja, Tima*; being the usual method, as we had learned it, of opening a friendly communication. On this, they threw their knives and spears into the air in every direction, returning the shout *Aja*, and extending their arms to show that they also were without weapons. But as they did not quit their places, we advanced, and embraced in succession all those in the front line, stroking down their dress also, and receiving from them in return this established ceremony of friendship. This seemed to produce great delight, expressed, on all hands, by laughing, and clamour, and strange gestures: while we immediately found ourselves established in their unhesitating confidence.

Commander Ross' experience was here of great use; and, being informed that we were Europeans (*Kabluna*), they answered that they were men Inuit. Their numbers amounted to thirty-one; the eldest, called Illieta, being sixty-five years of age, six others between forty and fifty, and twenty of them between forty and twenty; the number being made up by four boys. Two were lame, and, with the old man, were drawn by the others on sledges: one of them having lost a leg, from a bear as we understood, and the other having a broken or diseased thigh. They were all well dressed, in excellent deerskins chiefly; the upper garments double, and encircling the body, reaching, in front, from the chin to the middle of the thigh, and having a cape behind to draw over the head, while the skirt hung down to the calf of the leg, in a peak not unlike that of a soldier's coat of former days. The sleeves covered the fingers; and, of the two skins which composed all this, the inner one had the hair next the body, and the outer one in the reverse direction. They had two pairs of boots on, with the hairy side of both turned inwards, and above them, trousers of deerkin, reaching very low on the leg; while some of them had shoes outside of their boots, and

* See *Mirror*, vol. xxiii. p. 49.

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With this immense superstructure of clothes, they seemed a much larger people than they really were. All of them bore spears, looking not much unlike a walking stick, with a ball of wood or ivory at one end, and a point of horn at the other. On examining the shafts, however, they were found to be formed of small pieces of wood, or of the bones of animals, joined together very neatly. The knives that we first saw, consisted of bone, or reindeer's horn, without point or edge, forming a very inoffensive weapon; but we soon discovered that each of them had, hanging at his back, a much more effective knife pointed with iron, and some also edged with that metal. One of them proved also to be formed of the blade of an English clasp-knife, having the maker's mark on it, which had been so fixed as to be converted into a dagger.

This was a proof of communication with the tribes that trade with Europeans, if that was not the case with themselves.

Three of the men were, after this, introduced into the cabin, where, at length, they showed abundant signs of wonder. The engravings, representing their countrymen, selected from the several former voyages, gave them great delight, as they instantly recognised them to be portraits of their own race. The looking-glasses, as usual, were, however, the chief source of astonishment, as, especially, was a sight of themselves in our largest mirror. Scarcely less surprise was excited by the lamp and the candlesticks; but they never once showed a desire to possess themselves of anything; receiving, merely, what was offered, with signs of thankfulness that could not be mistaken. They did not relish our preserved meat; but one who ate a morsel seemed to do it as a matter of obedience, saying it was very good, but admitting, on being cross-questioned by Commander Ross, that he had said what was not true; on which, all the rest, on receiving permission, threw away what they had taken. But the same man, on being offered some oil, drank it with much satisfaction, admitting that it was really good.

Captain Ross considers this a most satisfactory day; for he had given up all expectation of meeting inhabitants in this place; while he knew that it was to the natives he must look for such geographical information as would assist him out of his difficulties, and in pursuing his course. On the following day, (January 10,) Sunday, after divine service, with the thermometer minus 37°, Captain Ross again met the Boothians, whose number was now increased by twenty children; and the whole party soon reached North Hendon, a little group of]

Snow Cottages.

The village consisted of twelve snow huts, erected at the bottom of a little bight on the shore, about two miles and a half from the ship. They had the appearance of inverted basins, and were placed without any order; each of them having a long, crooked appendage, in which was the passage, at the entrance of which were the women, with the female children and infants. We were soon invited to visit these, for whom we had prepared presents of glass beads and needles; a distribution of which soon drove away the timidity which they had displayed at our first appearance.

The passage always long and generally crooked, led to the principal apartment, which was a circular dome, being ten feet in diameter when intended for one family, and an oval of fifteen by ten where it lodged two. Opposite the doorway there was a bank of snow, occupying nearly a third of the breadth of the area, about two feet and a half high, level at the top, and covered by various skins; forming the general bed or sleeping place for the whole. At the end of this sat the mistress of the house, opposite to the lamp, which, being of moss and oil, as is the universal custom in these regions, gave a sufficient flame to supply both light and heat; so that the apartment was perfectly comfortable. Over the lamp was the cooking dish of stone, containing the flesh of deer and of seals, with oil; and of such provision there seemed no want. Every thing else, dresses, implements, as well as provisions, lay about in unspeakable confusion, showing that order, at least, was not in the class of their virtues.

Of these huts, built entirely of snow, I must add, that they were all lighted by a large, oval piece of clear ice, fixed about half way up on the eastern side of the roof; while the variations among the different ones that we inspected were trifling. But we also saw afterwards, what had escaped us before where was so little light to discern any thing, that about the middle of each passage was an antechamber leading into a recess for the dogs. It was obvious too, that the external aperture could be turned at any time, so as to be always on the lee-side, and thus prevent the wind from entering. We found that these huts had been but just erected: they were scarcely a day old, so that the architectural processes of this country do not occupy much time. It was also ascertained that their winter stock of seal and reindeer was buried in the snow, that this store was laid up in the summer, and that they returned to it in the winter. Hitherto, this practice had not been found among the natives of these countries; whether overlooked or not, we could not decide.

[Captain Ross' attempt to make a drawing of this village excited much uneasiness at first; but the Esquimaux were satisfied as soon as the purpose was explained, and were delighted with the identity of the representation when the sketch was finished; each recognising his own house. We have not space to quote further from these interesting interviews with the Boothians. Their most important result was the drawing of a Chart which Captain Ross has in his possession, and a copy of which forms one of the illustrations to his Narrative. One or two traits are, however, too amusing to be omitted. Having spoken of a large reading-glass through which, when held between them, each Boothian saw his friend's face magnified beyond all understanding, Captain Ross rejoices that there is no cheap science in this little land of night, to interfere with their admiration; "though one bad effect, at least, of their ignorance was displayed in their abhorrence of plum-pudding, with which" Captain Ross "had vainly hoped to regale stomachs accustomed to find blubber a sweetmeat, and train oil preferable to marmashino."—"This, indeed," continues the Captain, "we had not to give them; but our brandy was as odious as our pudding; and they have yet, therefore, to acquire the taste which has, in ruining the morals, hastened the extermination of their American neighbours to the southward." Blissful ignorance! Again, the Captain having made each of the natives happy by presenting him with an empty meat-canister, adds, "Let no man imagine that he knows what a present is worth, till he has found what happiness can be produced by a blue bead, a yellow button, or a piece of an old iron hoop." Another incident, and we have done. It has been noticed that one of the natives had lost a leg by a bear, and was conveyed about in a sledge. Captain Ross offered to supply the poor fellow with a wooden limb: the promised leg being complete, was fitted on: there was little time lost in finding its use and value, as the disabled person began to strut about the cabin in apparent ecstasy; "with more reason," observes Captain Ross, "certainly to be delighted with his present, than all the others united, with what they had received. All the surgery of this case lay indeed with the carpenter, not the worst operator, I believe, in this compound profession; but I doubt if any effort of surgery ever gave more satisfaction than we had thus conferred, in reproducing a man fully serviceable once more to himself and his community. The leg was inscribed with the name of the ship, and packed up in the sledge, as it was not yet sufficiently familiar for a journey of two miles through ice and snow.

"On January 20, the sun appeared for the

first time after an absence of fifty days, being about half its diameter above the visible horizon; so that we might have seen the upper limb before, had the sky been sufficiently clear. That, however, which gave us pleasure had no such effect on the Esquimaux, to whom the night of this region is their day; or, to which it is at least far preferable, since it is of far more value to them in hunting the cunning and cautious seals. For this reason, they always returned home when the day broke; complaining of the light as their enemy, and as the cause of a compulsory, not a wilful blindness."

The reader may, probably, be further amused with the details of

Building a Snow House.

In the evening, four families of the natives, comprising fifteen persons, passed the ship to erect new huts about half a mile to the southward. They had four heavy-laden sledges, drawn, each, by two or three dogs, but proceeded very slowly. We went after them to see the process of building the snow house, and were surprised at their dexterity; one man having closed in his roof within forty-five minutes. A tent is scarcely pitched sooner than a house is here built.

The whole process is, perhaps, worth describing. Having ascertained, by the rod used in examining seal holes, whether the snow is sufficiently deep and solid, they level the intended spot by a wooden shovel, leaving beneath a solid mass of snow not less than three feet thick. Commencing then in the centre of the intended circle, which is ten feet or more in diameter, different wedge-shaped blocks are cut out, about two feet long, and a foot thick at the outer part; then trimming them accurately by the knife, they proceed upwards until the courses, gradually inclined inwards, terminate in a perfect dome. The door being cut out from the inside, before it is quite closed, serves to supply the upper materials. In the mean time, the women are employed in stuffing the joints with snow, and the boys in constructing kennels for the dogs. The laying of the snow sofa with skins, and the insertion of the ice window, completes the work; the passage only remaining to be added, as it is after the house is finished, together with some smaller huts for stores. Some of the children, in the mean time, were aping their parents in a toy architecture of their own. One whose hand had been bitten by a dog, was taken on board to the surgeon; and we supplied them with water, to save them the trouble of thawing for themselves.

[Commander Ross' several journeys over land, water, and snow, furnish many pages of perilous and hopeful adventures, one of which we quote, on account of it being the only occasion on which the Esquimaux ever

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Commander Ross' Adventure with Esquimaux.

We departed early in the morning of the 27th of April, and approaching the huts were exceedingly disappointed at not hearing the cheerful shouts with which we had been usually greeted. That was succeeded by a very disagreeable surprise, on finding that the women and children had been all sent out of the way, since we knew this to be a signal of war; a fact of which we were speedily convinced by seeing that all the men were armed with their knives. The fierce and sullen looks of these people also boded mischief: but what the cause of all this could be, it was quite impossible to conjecture.

We could see them better than they could distinguish us, as the sun was in their faces; it was the noise of our dogs which gave them notice of our arrival and proximity; and as soon as this was heard, one of them rushed out of a hut, brandishing the large knife used in attacking bears, while the tears were streaming down his aged and furrowed face, which was turning wildly round in search of the objects of his animosity. In an instant he lifted his arm to throw his weapon at myself and the surgeon, who were then within a few yards of him, having advanced in order to ascertain the cause of all this commotion. But the sun, dazzling him, caused him to suspend his arm for an instant; when one of his sons laid hold of his uplifted hand, and gave us a moment's time for reflection.

The result of that was, of course, an immediate preparation for defence; though we could have done little against such odds as our unexpected enemies displayed. We therefore retired to the sledge, where I had left my gun; and not daring again to quit it, as Mr. Abernethy had no arms, waited for the result, while losing ourselves in vain conjectures respecting the cause of offence, seeing that we had parted good friends on the preceding day.

The ferocious old man Pow-weet-yah was still held fast, and, now by both his sons, who had pinioned his arms behind him; though he strove hard to disengage himself; while the rest of the party seemed to be standing in readiness to second any attempt which he might make on us. That there was some difference of opinion among them, however, and that all were not equally hostile, was plain from the conduct of these young men; so that we could still hope for some parley before matters came to extremity. They now began to talk among themselves, and then separated in such a manner as to

be ready to surround us, which having nearly effected, and we not choosing to be so cut off from the ship, I warned those who were closing in on the rear, to desist. This produced a short pause, and a still shorter conference; but they immediately again began to close in, brandishing their knives in defiance, according to their usual custom, and had nearly gained their object, when finding that further forbearance would be hazardous, I placed the gun to my shoulder, and was about to fire, when I fortunately saw that the threat alone was sufficient to give them a check. With little loss of time, those who had advanced nearest broke off, in evident alarm, and retreated towards their huts; thus leaving us an open passage in the rear.

But as I could not induce any of them to approach, or to answer my questions, we continued for nearly half an hour in this state of suspense and perplexity, when we were relieved by the courage or confidence of one of the women, who came out of a hut just as I was again raising my gun, and called on me not to fire, advancing up to our party immediately, without showing the least mark of fear.

From her, we soon learned the cause of all this hubbub, which, absurd as it was, might have had a fatal termination, as we should probably have been the chief sufferers. One of Pow-weet-yah's adopted sons, a fine boy of seven or eight years of age, whom we knew, had been killed on the preceding night, by the falling of a stone on his head. This they had ascribed to our agency, through the supernatural powers which we were believed to possess; while the father, not very unnaturally under this conviction, had meditated revenge in the manner which we had experienced.

I had much difficulty in persuading the good woman that we were totally ignorant of this catastrophe, and that we were very sorry for the misfortune; she, however, repeated all that I had said to two of the men who had not taken any share in the business of the attack, and who now approached us unarmed, in token of peace. Their object was to persuade us to go back to the ship, and to return in three days, when they offered to be our guides to the desired place. But many reasons opposed this scheme; of which the chief was, that as this was the first misunderstanding that had occurred between us, it was essential to come to an understanding, and to renew our friendships, without any delay, lest the opportunity should not again occur; as they might go away in the mean time, whether from fear of our returning in greater numbers, or for any other reason, and thus, not only cause a lasting estrangement as to themselves, but a general hostility or desertion on the part of all the natives within their connexions or reach; thus ren-

dering the whole land our enemies. I therefore objected to this proposal, and declared that I would not go back till we were all once more good friends: when perceiving that the hostile party was gradually approaching our group, though, probably, but to hear the conversation that was passing, I drew a line on the snow, and declared that none of them should cross it without putting away their knives, which they still continued to grasp in their right hands, with their arms folded across the breast. After some conversation among themselves, their grim visages began to relax, the knives were put up; and, becoming at last apparently convinced that we had no concern in the death of this boy, they seemed now very anxious to remove the unfavourable impression which their conduct, as they must needs conclude, had made on us.

But they still urged us to return to the ship, because, as they said, it was impossible for them to make use of their dogs till three days had passed away after the death of any one belonging to a family. Though, in all probability, this was really a funeral usage, or a settled period of mourning, I was unwilling to yield this point, could I possibly carry it; as the loss of even three days at this season was an important consideration.

I therefore produced a large file, offering it to any one of the party who would go with me, and assuring them at the same time, that if they all refused I should go alone, and they would thus lose the reward. On this, a consultation of some minutes took place, in which I heard the word "Erk-she," (angry,) frequently used, accompanied by my name: which being ended, the man called Poo-yet-tah seemed to yield to his wife's entreaties, and offered to accompany me, provided I would allow Il-lik-tah, a fine lad of sixteen or seventeen to be associated with him.

This I of course agreed to, as two companions would be more useful than one; and they accordingly went off to the huts to prepare for the journey. That the peace was now considered as perfectly re-established, there could no longer be any doubt; since they crowded round us, soon resuming their usual friendly and confidential behaviour, and putting on that cheerfulness of countenance which was their habitual expression.

[In the third journey, in which this adventure occurred, the party consisted but of Commander Ross, and three others, including the two Esquimaux conductors; the baggage and provisions being placed on two sledges, each drawn by six dogs. Their sufferings in this journey were many and acute. On May 2, after a night's rest, they had to dig themselves out of the snow, which occupied four hours, since it had attained a depth of six feet above them. Their pro-

gress was then very slow: they were exceedingly fatigued, and suffered so from thirst, that they were obliged to unload the sledge, to get at the spirit-lamp, that they might melt some snow for drinking. This privation leads Commander Ross to the following general observations upon]

Thirst in the Arctic Regions.

It must appear strange to readers ignorant of these countries, to hear that the people suffer more from thirst, when travelling, than from all the other inconveniences united. By us, at home, where the snow can never be very cold, where it can, therefore, be easily melted by the ordinary heat of the body, and where it can even be eaten as a substitute for water, the very different temperature of the same substance in that country is easily overlooked, as many persons are even ignorant of this fact. No great inconvenience can occur as to this matter, where its heat is rarely much below the freezing point, and scarcely ever falls as low as twenty degrees. It is a very different thing, when, perhaps, the highest temperature of the snow during the winter months is at zero, and when it often falls to minus fifty or more, or to eighty degrees below the point at which we should attempt to thaw or to eat it in England. Were it not so bad a conductor as it is, we could, in this country, no more take it into the mouth, or hold it in the hands, than if it was so much red-hot iron: but, from that cause, this consequence at least does not follow. The effect, nevertheless, which it does produce, is that of increasing, instead of removing, the thirst which it is endeavoured to quench: so that the natives prefer enduring the utmost extremity of this feeling, rather than attempt to remove it by the eating of snow. I am not sufficiently acquainted with medical philosophy to explain this, nor am I aware that it has been explained: and it is, perhaps, as unfounded, as it is, in me, presuming to suggest that the extreme cold of the material thus swallowed, when the body is heated and exhausted by fatigue, may bring on some inflammatory state of the stomach, so as to cause the suffering in question.

[The last expedition in May, 1830, is, in many respects, the most important. The party consisted but of four persons; and though assisted by eight dogs in a second sledge, their load was as great as they could manage, since it consisted of three weeks' provision, besides instruments and clothes, and a skin boat. On May 19, they arrived in sight of the Western Sea; and from a hill, the Commander determined his future route, and could discern the low land of the opposite shore, stretching to within fifteen or twenty degrees of Cape Isabella, to which he

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Arrival on the Shores of the Western Sea.

The party which I had thus quitted for a short time, had announced their arrival on the shores of the western sea by three cheers: it was to me, as well as to them, and still more indeed to the leader than to his followers, a moment of interest well deserving the usual "hail" of a seaman; for it was the ocean that we had pursued, the object of our hopes and exertions; the free space which, as we once had hoped, was to have carried us round the American continent, which ought to have given us the triumph for which we and all our predecessors had laboured so long and so hard. It would have done all this had not Nature forbidden; it might have done all this had our chain of lakes been an inlet, had this valley formed a free communication between the eastern and western seas; but we had, at least, ascertained the impossibility; the desired sea was at our feet, we were soon to be travelling along its surface; and, in our final disappointment, we had at least the consolation of having removed all doubts and quenched all anxiety, of feeling that where God had said No, it was for man to submit, and to be thankful for what had been granted. It was a solemn moment, never to be forgotten; and never was the cheering of a seaman so impressive, breaking as it did on the stillness of the night, amid this dreary waste of ice and snow, where there was not an object to remind us of life, and not a sound seemed ever to have been heard.

At midnight we proceeded over the sea-ice, and arrived at the desired Cape at six in the morning. Our encampment here was of a novel nature, being formed by excavating, in a ridge of snow, a burrow large enough to contain the party, which was then roofed by the skin boat; securing afterwards its sides to the surface by means of the snow that had been removed. An opening being made on the side, it was stopped up by a block of snow for a door, and by means of the blankets, bags, we contrived to make our beds both warm and soft. A spirit-lamp served to melt sufficient snow for drink; while thus, for many subsequent nights, we enjoyed a sounder sleep than we had often done under circumstances far more comfortable and promising.

[The results of this journey were the reaching within 200 miles of Cape Turnagain. This had occupied thirteen days, and as many more would have enabled the party "to do all that was remaining, to return triumphant to the Victory, and to carry to England a truly worthy fruit of our long and hard labours."]

Time was not, however, wanting, but the

very means of existence. They had brought but twenty-one days provision from the ship, and much more than half was already consumed; so that having advanced one day further, they were compelled to return. They therefore unfurled their flag for the usual ceremony, and took possession of what they saw as far as the distant point, while that on which they stood was named Victory Point; being the *ne plus ultra* of their labour, as it afterwards proved, while it will remain a standard record of the exertions of that ship's crew. The point to the south-west was also named Cape Franklin. On Victory Point, they erected a cairn of stones six feet high, and they inclosed in it a canister containing a brief account of the proceedings of the expedition since its departure from England. It was one in the morning, May 30, that the party turned their backs on this last and furthest point of their journey, arriving at their former encampment at six. Of this point, named Culgruff, the longitude is $98^{\circ} 32' 48''$ west, and the latitude $69^{\circ} 46' 19''$. Victory Point lies in latitude $69^{\circ} 37' 49''$, and longitude $98^{\circ} 40' 49''$: while of Point Franklin, as near as could be determined from an estimated distance, the latitude is $69^{\circ} 31' 13''$, and the longitude $99^{\circ} 17' 58''$.

[The summer of 1830 proved ungenial. The month of July was passed in a fishing expedition by Captain Ross and his party; the ship was refitted, and the health of the men much improved. But so tardily had the season advanced, that, on the 1st of August, no clear sea had been observed, nor had any of the ice on it appeared to move, until this day; and six weeks had elapsed before Captain Ross "cast off, and warped through the bay ice," and the ship was, at length, once more in clear water and under sail. Thus freed, they advanced but *three miles*, and were again stopped; and on September 30 found themselves at the above distance from the spot where they were fixed in September of the preceding year. They endeavoured to reach this spot; but, in a month, they cut through only 550 feet of ice, which now became so thick, that they were compelled to give up labour, and winter there.

In April, 1831, Commander Ross and five men journeyed 150 miles, finding the ice very rough, and the thermometer being 18° minus; and remarking that the pressure on the sea ice had been so great, that many large pieces had been forced up the rocks to the height of forty feet. After his return Commander Ross set out on his expedition to ascertain the position of the magnetic pole, and his advances to this mystic spot are thus described:—]

Approach to the Magnetic Pole.

We were now within fourteen miles of the calculated position of the magnetic pole;

and my anxiety, therefore, did not permit me to do or endure any thing which might delay my arrival at the long wished-for spot. We commenced, therefore, a rapid march, comparatively disencumbered; and, persevering with all our might, we reached the calculated place at eight in the morning of the first of June. I believe I must leave it to others to imagine the elation of mind with which we found ourselves now at length arrived at this great object of our ambition: it almost seemed as if we had accomplished every thing that we had come so far to see and to do; as if our voyage and all its labours were at an end, and that nothing now remained for us but to return home and be happy for the rest of our days. They were after-thoughts which told us that we had much yet to endure and much to perform, and they were thoughts which did not then intrude; could they have done so, we should have cast them aside, under our present excitement: we were happy, and desired to remain so as long as we could.

The land at this place is very low near the coast, but it rises into ridges of fifty or sixty feet high about a mile inland. We could have wished that a place so important had possessed more of mark or note. It was scarcely censurable to regret that there was not a mountain to indicate a spot to which so much of interest must ever be attached; and I could even have pardoned any one among us who had been so romantic or absurd as to expect that the magnetic pole was an object as conspicuous and mysterious as the fabled mountain of Sinbad, that it even was a mountain of iron, or a magnet as large as Mont Blanc. But Nature had here erected no monument to denote the spot which she had chosen as the centre of one of her great and dark powers; and where we could do little ourselves towards this end, it was our business to submit, and to be content in noting, by mathematical numbers and signs, as with things of far more importance in the terrestrial system, what we could but ill distinguish in any other manner.

We were, however, fortunate in here finding some huts of Esquimaux, that had not long been abandoned. Unconscious of the value which not only we, but all the civilized world, attached to this place, it would have been a vain attempt on our part to account to them for our delight, had they been present. It was better for us that they were not; since we thus took possession of their works, and were thence enabled to establish our observations with the greater ease; encamping at six in the evening on a point of land about half a mile to the westward of those abandoned snow houses.

The necessary observations were immediately commenced, and they were continued

throughout this and the greater part of the following day. Of these, the details for the purposes of science have been since communicated to the Royal Society; as a paper containing all that philosophers require on the subject has now also been printed in their Transactions.

But it will gratify general curiosity to state the most conspicuous results in a simple and popular manner. The place of the observatory was as near to the magnetic pole as the limited means which I possessed enabled me to determine. The amount of the dip, as indicated by my dipping needle, was $89^{\circ} 59'$, being thus within one minute of the vertical; while the proximity at least of this pole, if not its actual existence where we stood, was further confirmed by the action, or rather by the total inaction of the several horizontal needles then in my possession. These were suspended in the most delicate manner possible, but there was not one which showed the slightest effort to move from the position in which it was placed: a fact, which even the most moderately informed of readers must now know to be one which proves that the centre of attraction lies at a very small horizontal distance, if at any.

As soon as I had satisfied my own mind on the subject, I made known to the party this gratifying result of all our joint labours; and it was then, that amidst mutual congratulations, we fixed the British flag on the spot, and took possession of the North Magnetic Pole and its adjoining territory, in the name of Great Britain and King William the Fourth. We had abundance of materials for building in the fragments of limestone that covered the beach; and we therefore erected a cairn of some magnitude, under which we buried a canister, containing a record of the interesting fact: only regretting that we had not the means of constructing a pyramid of more importance, and of strength sufficient to withstand the assaults of time and of the Esquimaux. Had it been a pyramid as large as that of Cheops, I am not quite sure that it would have done more than satisfy our ambition, under the feelings of that exciting day. The latitude of this spot is $70^{\circ} 5' 17''$, and its longitude $96^{\circ} 46' 45''$ west.

This subject is much too interesting, even to general readers, to permit the omission of a few other remarks relating to the scientific part of this question, desirous as I have been of passing over or curtailing these. During our absence, Professor Barlow had laid down all the curves of equal variation to within a few degrees of the point of their concurrence; leaving that point, of course, to be determined by observation, should such observation ever fall within the power of navigators. It was most gratifying to find, on

our return, examining the curves, had the chart. [The ship to not get gust, but 3,000 made b it was in such a around pect, he seemed extricate to abandon The m Christm Christm "a round Fury's with some as the d The One of the v In the destined prison, a deder it beyond the ice ship, wh liberation his men was impu sions and was still being the was severe the first zero. M sledges f Through and early rose on passed sea tain Ross record of ture. The ship, and for supply boats then proceed to provisions posit them wards. 7 and draw sometimes The drift and build room was On April

our return, that the place which I had thus examined was precisely that one where these curves should have coincided in a centre, had they been protracted on his magnetic chart.

[The fortunate discoverers returned to the ship towards the middle of June, but did not get clear of the ice until the end of August, having previously obtained and stored 3,000 salmon. In the following month, they made but little progress; and, at its close, it was impossible to expect any further under such a mass and weight of winter as that around them. The worst part of the prospect, however, was the distant one; and it seemed likely that the ship would never be extricated, and that they should be compelled to abandon her with all that was on board. The men began to despair, but, towards Christmas, their hopes brightened; and Christmas-day was kept, in the cabin, with "a round of beef which had been in the Fury's stores for eight years, and which, with some veal and vegetables, was as good as the day on which it was cooked."

The year 1832 commenced disastrously. One of the crew died, and the general health of the whole number was much enfeebled. In the beginning of February, it seemed destined that the ship should really be their prison, as the stormy and cold weather rendered it seldom possible to show themselves beyond the roof or deck. On February 29, the ice was more than six feet round the ship, which thickness prevented all hopes of liberation, even though Captain Ross and his men should continue with her, which was impossible from the state of the provisions and the health of the crew. March was still more dreary; the taking of a fox being the only event of a week: the sea ice was seven feet thick, and the temperature of the first half of the month was 42° under zero. Meanwhile, the carpenter had finished sledges for the boats, provisions, and fuel. Throughout April they prepared to depart; and early in the month, the thermometer rose on a sudden to plus 7° ; not having passed zero before for 136 days: and Captain Ross does not believe there is another record of such a continuous low temperature. They now resolved to abandon the ship, and proceed to Fury Beach, not only for supplies, but to get possession of the boats there. Their immediate object was to proceed to a certain distance with a stock of provisions and the boats, and there to deposit them, so as to advance more easily afterwards. The weights were divided equally, and drawn or carried through rough ice, sometimes at the rate of a mile in five hours. The drift snow soon obliged them to halt, and build snow huts, in which the sleeping room was 47° under the freezing point! On April 25, the meat was so hard frozen,

that they were obliged to cut it with a saw, and could only afford to thaw it by putting it into their warm cocoa, as they could not spare fuel for both purposes. A strong gale with a snow drift nearly covered their hut in a short time; and they were next obstructed by a ridge of rocks jutting into the sea, on which the ice had accumulated fifty feet high! How this obstacle was surmounted by dragging and carrying the sledges, we have not space to detail; but may observe that the total result of this journey was, that they had walked 110 miles, and had really advanced but 18; while it was necessary to go over this space three times more, before every thing could be even thus far advanced in a journey which was destined ultimately to be 300 miles, though the direct one was only 180. After another month of similar toil, they finally abandoned the vessel on May 29. The chronometers and astronomical instruments, which could be spared and could not be taken, were concealed, with some gunpowder; and they had secured every thing on shore which could be of use to them in case of their return, or which would otherwise prove of use to the natives. The colours were, therefore, hoisted and nailed to the mast, they drank a parting glass to their poor ship, and having seen every man out, in the evening, Captain Ross took his own adieu of the Victory, which had deserved a better fate. It was the first vessel that he had ever been obliged to abandon, after having served in thirty-six, during a period of forty-two years. The plan of the journey now undertaken was, to carry both the boats on to Elizabeth Harbour, with provisions for six weeks at full allowance: there to deposit the boats and half the provisions, and to proceed with the sledges and the other half till they reached the latitude of 71° , whence they should send a light party of five to Fury Beach.

They ended the month of June within hail of this desired spot. The water was now, at last, running down the large cracks in the ice, and three ravines were pouring down their torrents; the last part of their journey was unusually laborious, from the wedged masses of ice, so packed as to denote the violence which they had undergone; but they at length passed them all, and encamped at Fury Beach, on July 1. They now examined the stores, part of which were damaged by the high rise of the sea; and the foxes had opened some boxes and devoured the candles in them. By the first evening, the men had built a house 31 by 16 feet, and seven feet in height, covered with canvass; which they nicknamed Somerset House; this tract having been previously called North Somerset. The carpenters also repaired the boats; and the ice having broken

up on the last day of July, they prepared to start, hoping to quit this strait and reach Baffin's Bay before the departure of the whaling vessels. They pursued another perilous course, though only to find on September 20, that the junction of Barrow's Strait and Prince Regent's Inlet was a continuous solid mass of ice, giving no hopes of breaking up this season; while the land was equally blocked up by heavy ice. Accordingly, they were obliged to leave their boats in Batty's Bay, to return from whence they had come, on October 7, and to winter again at Fury Beach: their luxuries were now exhausted, and foxes and snow water served for the Christmas dinner.

The winter must have passed as drearily as before. On April 19, they prepared to depart by advance journeys, which occupied nearly six weeks; till, at length, on July 8, every thing was ready, and they quitted this dreary place, as they hoped, for ever. Happily, it proved so; for, notwithstanding their having to carry three sick men, and working even at night in their shirts, they reached the boats in Batty's Bay, on July 12. They began cutting the shore ice at four o'clock in the morning; and the tide having risen soon after, with a fine westerly breeze, they launched the boats, embarked the stores and the sick, and, at eight o'clock were under way. They soon rounded the north cape of Batty Bay, and, finding a lane of water, crossed Elwin's Bay at midnight; reaching on the 16th, that spot to the north of it where they had pitched their tents on August 28, in the preceding year. They found here no passage to the eastward, but the lane of water still extended towards the north, and at eight in the evening they reached their former position at the north-eastern cape of America. They here found they could sail through the ice northward and north-eastward; it being calm, they held on to the eastward by rowing, until they reached the edge of the packed ice; when they found that its extremity was but a mile to the northward. A southerly breeze enabled them to round it; when, finding the water open, they stood on through it, and reached the eastern shore of Prince Regent's Inlet on August 17. They strove on, for nine days, putting ashore to sleep; and on August 26, at four in the morning, when all were asleep, the look-out man discovered a sail in the offing, which proved to be "the Isabella of Hull, once commanded by Captain Ross." The joyful sequel of their return to England, their hearty welcome here, and their honorary and other rewards—are circumstances too well known for us to repeat; especially as our extracts have already exceeded their limit, though we hope not their interest to the reader.

Poetry.

YARROW REVISITED, AND OTHER POEMS.

(By William Wordsworth.)

[An opinion of the poetry of Wordsworth would be somewhat late in the day, seeing that it is forty years since the publication of his *Descriptive Sketches*, of which Coleridge observed, "seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original, poetical genius above the literary horizon, more evidently announced." It may, likewise, be remarked that seldom has the possession of genius been more disputed than in the many conflicting criticisms of Mr. Wordsworth's poetry: it has been extolled overmuch by indolent friends, and as bitterly reviled by jealous assailants: its beauties have been magnified into sublimities, and its puerilities exaggerated into nonsense. Between these extravagant views we have ever been inclined to take the middle position, and to admit that, amongst many defects, our admiration will scarcely ever exhaust the variety, originality, simplicity, and grandeur of Wordsworthian poetry. Rather than pin our faith to the opinion of Coleridge, that "in imaginative powers, Wordsworth stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakspeare," we incline to the following estimate of his genius:—"The variety of subjects which Wordsworth has touched, the varied powers which he has displayed, the passages of redeeming beauty interspersed even among the worst and dullest of his productions; the originality of detached thoughts, scattered throughout works to which, on the whole, we must deny the praise of originality; the deep pathos and occasional grandeur of his style; the real poetical feeling which generally runs through its many modulations; his accurate observation of external nature; and the success with which he blends the purest and most devotional thoughts with the glories of the visible universe—all these are merits, which so far 'make up in number what they want in weight,' that, although insufficient to raise him to the shrine, they fairly admit him within the sacred temple of poetry."* These, to our minds, are the true characteristics of Wordsworth's poetry; and that they are beginning to be so appreciated is best proved by the rising popularity of Wordsworth, especially as some kind friend has taken the poems in hand, and sifted the sublime from the ridiculous, the simplicity from the affectation, in fine, the good from the indifferent, among the productions of the poet's miscellaneous muse. This rise in public estimation is no critical theory; for it has sterling proof—the improved sale of the poems themselves; and right glad are we to congratulate

* Blackwood's Magazine.

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late the benevolent poet on this successful issue, though it be after a probation of forty years.

The present volume contains about one hundred and fifty pieces, many of which are sonnets full of the majesty of poetry. *Yarrow Revisited* consists of stanzas as a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott, and other friends visiting the banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford for Naples. This is not, to our taste, the most striking piece in the volume, though it occupies the first place; the following passage, however, is full of pathos and touching beauty:

For thee, O Scott! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Teviot
For mild Sorento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy link
With native Fancy her fresh aid
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

O! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age,
With Strength, her venturesome brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Where'er thy path invite thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite Thee!

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self—
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

[Dispensing with further note or comment, we shall proceed to string together a few of the gems of this delightful volume.]

A Place of Burial in the South of Scotland.

Part fenced by man, part by a ragged steep
That curbs a foaming brook, a Grave-yard lies;
The Harp's best crouching place for fearless sleep;
Which moonlit Elves, far seen by credulous eyes,
Enter in dance. Of Church or Sabbath ties,
No vestige now remains; yet thither creep
Bereft Oves, and in lowly anguish weep
Their prayers out to the wind and naked skies,
Proud tomb is none; but rudely sculptured knights,
By humble choice of plain, old times, are seen
Level with earth among the hillocks green:
Union not sad, when sunny daybreak smites
The spangled turf, and neighbouring thickets ring
With jubilate from the choirs of spring!

Eagles.—Composed at Dunollie Castle in the Bay of Oban.

Dishonoured Rock and Ruin! that, by law
Tyrannic, keep the Bird of Jove embared,
Like a lone criminal whose life is spared.
Vexed is he, and screams loud. The last I saw
Was on the wing; stooping, he struck with awe
Man, bird, and beast; then, with a Consort paired,
From a bold headland, their loved airy guard,
Flew high above Atlantic waves to draw
Light from the fountain of the setting sun.
Such was this Prisoner once; and, when his plumes
The sea-blast ruffles as the storm comes on,
In spirit, for a moment, he resumes
His rank 'mong freeborn creatures that live free,
His power, his beauty, and his majesty.

Countess' Pillar.

[On the road between Peurith and Appleby, there stands a pillar with the following inscription:—

"This pillar was erected, in the year 1656, by Aune, Countess Dowager of Pembroke, &c., for a memorial of her last parting with her pious mother, Margaret, Countess Dowager of Cumberland, on the 2nd of April, 1616; in memory whereof she hath left an annuity of 4l. to be distributed to the poor of the parish of Brougham, every 2nd day of April for ever, upon the stone table placed hard by. Laus Deo!"

While the poor gather round till the end of time
May this bright flower of Charity display
Its bloom, unfolding at the appointed day;
Flower than the loveliest of the vernal prime
Loveller—transplanted from Heaven's purest clime!
"Charity never faileth" on that creed,
More than on written testament or deed,
The pious lady built with hope sublime.
Alms on this stone to be dealt out, for ever!
"Laus Deo." Many a stranger passing by
Has with that parting mixed a filial sigh,
Blest its humane memorial's fond endeavour;
And, fastening on those lines an eye tear-glazed,
Has ended, though no Clerk, with "God be praised!"

Epitaph.

By a blest Husband guided, Mary came
From nearest kindred, ***** her new name;
She came, though meek of soul, in seemingly pride
Of happiness and hope, a youthful Bride.
O dread reverse! if aught be so, which proves
That God will chasten whom he dearly loves.
Faith bore her up through pains in mercy given,
And troubles that were each a step to Heaven:
Two Babes were laid in earth before she died;
A third now slumbers at the Mother's side;
Its Sister-twin survives, whose smiles afford
A trembling solace to her widowed Lord.

Reader! if to thy bosom cling the pain
Of recent sorrow combated in vain;
Or if thy cherished grief have failed to thwart
Time still intent on his insidious part,
Lulling the Mourner's best good thoughts asleep,
Pillering regrets we would, but cannot keep;
Bear with him—judge Him gently who makes known
His bitter loss by this memorial Stone;
And pray that in his faithful breast the grace
Of resignation find a hallowed place.

Chatsworth.

Chatsworth! thy stately mansion, and the pride
Of thy domain strange contrast do present
To house and home in many a craggy rent
Of the wild Peak; where new-born waters glide
Through fields whose thrifty occupants abide
As in a dear and chosen banishment,
With every semblance of entire content;
So kind is simple Nature, fairly tried!
Yet He, whose heart in childhood gave her troth
To pastoral dales, thin-set with modest farms,
May learn, if judgment strengthen with his growth,
That, not for Fancy only, pomp hath charms;
And, strenuous to protect from lawless harms
The extremes of favoured life, may honour both.

Mem.

W.

220.

In the Frith of Clyde, Ailsa Crag.

(JULY 17, 1833.)

Since risen from ocean, ocean to defy,
 Appeared the Crag of Ailsa; ne'er did morn
 With gleaming lights more gracefully adorn
 His sides, or wreath with mist his forehead high:
 Now, faintly darkening with the sun's eclipse,
 Still is he seen, in lone sublimity,
 Towering above the sea and little ships;
 For dwarfs the tallest seem while sailing by,
 Each for her haven; with her freight of Care,
 Pleasure, or Grief, and Toil that seldom looks
 Into the secret of to-morrow's fare;
 Though poor, yet rich, without the wealth of books,
 Or aught that watchful Love to Nature owes
 For her mute Powers, fix'd Forms, and transient
 Shows.

Cave of Staffa.

Thanks for the lessons of this Spot—fit school
 For the presumptuous thoughts that would assign
 Mechanic laws to agency divine;
 And measuring heaven by earth, would overrule
 Infinite Power. The pillar'd vestibule,
 Expanding yet precise, the roof embowed,
 Might seem designed to humble Man, when proud
 Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.
 Down-bearing with his whole Atlantic weight
 Of tide and tempest on the structure's base,
 And flashing upwards to its topmost height,
 Ocean has proved its strength, and of its grace
 In calms is conscious, finding for his freight
 Of softest music some responsive place.

If this great world of joy and pain,
 Revolve in one sure track;
 If Freedom, set, will rise again,
 And Virtue, frown, come back;
 Woe to the purblind crew who fill
 The heart with each day's care;
 Nor gain, from past or future, skill
 To bear, and to forbear!

A Wren's Nest.

Among the dwellings framed by birds
 In field or forest with nice care,
 Is none that with the little Wren's
 In snugness may compare.
 No door the tenement requires,
 And seldom needs a laboured roof;
 Yet is it to the fiercest sun
 Impervious and storm-proof.
 So warm, so beautiful within,
 In perfect fitness for its aim,
 That to the Kind by special grace
 Their instinct surely came.
 And when for their abodes they seek
 An opportune recess,
 The Hermit has no finer eye
 For shadowy quietness.
 These find, 'mid ivied Abbey walls,
 A canopy in some still nook;
 Others are pent-housed by a braid
 That overhangs a brook.
 There to the brooding Bird her Mate
 Warbles by fits his low, clear song;
 And by the busy Streamlet both
 Are sung to all day long.
 Or in sequester'd lanes they build,
 Where till the sitting Bird's return,
 Her eggs within the nest repose,
 Like relics in an urn.
 But still, where general choice is good,
 There is a better and a best;
 And among fairest objects, some
 Are fairer than the rest;
 This, one of those small Builders proved
 In a green covert, where, from out
 The forehead of a pollard oak,
 The leafy antlers sprout;

For she who planned the mossy lodge,
 Mistrusting her evasive skill,
 Had to a Primrose looked for aid
 Her wishes to fulfil.

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
 And fixed an infant's span above
 The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest,
 The prettiest of the grove!

The treasure proudly did I show
 To some whose minds without disdain
 Can turn to little things, but once
 Looked up for it in vain:

'Tis gone—a ruthless Spoiler's prey,
 Who heeds not beauty, love, or song,
 'Tis gone! (so seemed it) and we grieved
 Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
 In clearer light the moss-built cell,
 I saw, espied its shaded mouth,
 And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
 The largest of her upright leaves;
 And thus, for purposes benign,
 A simple Flower deceives.

Concealed from friends who might disturb
 Thy quiet with no ill intent,
 Secure from evil eyes and hands
 On barbarous plunder bent.

Rest, mother-bird! and when thy young
 Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
 When withered is the guardian flower,
 And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
 Amid the unviolated grove
 Housed near the growing primrose tuft
 In foresight, or in love.

Sketches of Society.

BELFORD REGIS.

By Miss Mitford.

[HERE are three volumes of lively "Sketches of a Country Town," as pleasant as they are clever, and as full of entertainment as they are of truth and nature. In them the delightful writer has succeeded in portraying the microcosm of a country town—a specimen of *urbs in rure*—and, altogether, a very interesting cycle are the townsfolk of Belford Regis, as Miss Mitford has named their real or imaginary abode, we are uncertain which, though, that such persons do exist *somewhere* is certain, and beyond a *doubt*. We quote one of the Portraits, abridged.]

The Absent Member.

Everybody remembers the excellent character of an absent man by La Bruyère, since so capitally dramatized by Isaac Bickerstaff: everybody remembers the character, and everybody would have thought the whole account a most amusing and pleasant invention, had not the incredible facts been verified by the sayings and doings of a certain Parisian count, whose name has escaped me, a well-known individual of that day, whose *distractions* (I use the word in the French sense, and not in the English) set all exaggeration at defiance,—who was, in a word, more *dis-trait* than *Le Distrain* of La Bruyère.

He, "unrivaled a thing rally be glish odd No single has appe is by no then, esp mathema has the l powers o ject to la abstraction passes fa getfulness and is ne My ex such a m Eastern Lethe, a tent and Let the f not recog his own and the would at You mig murder in He would Of cou or rather nacter do less he w them. O occur mo take adva putting o when gett his assum going to perpetual He will fast-time, swallow t perception the comm condiment his food, minie San fill his gl and to p turbot ins has wou drinkables he, on the whiked b celerity of Bless me! I said that —he Barataria- cio de Agre gentleman would hav

He, "that nameless he," still remains unrivalled; as an odd Frenchman, when such a thing turns up, which is seldom, will generally be found to excel at all points your English oddity, which is comparatively common. No single specimen so complete in its kind has appeared in our country; but the genus is by no means extinct; and every now and then, especially amongst learned men, great mathematicians, and eminent Grecians, one has the luck to light upon an original, whose powers of perception and memory are subject to lapses the most extraordinary,—fits of abstraction, during which everything that passes falls unobserved into some pit of forgetfulness, like the oubliette of an old castle, and is never seen or heard of again.

My excellent friend Mr. Coningsby is just such a man. The Waters of Oblivion of the Eastern Fairy Tale, or the more classical Lethe, are but types to shadow forth the extent and variety of his anti-recollective faculty. Let the fit be strong upon him, and he shall not recognise his own mansion or remember his own name. Suppose him at Whitehall, and the fire which burnt the two Houses would at such a time hardly disturb him. You might, at certain moments, commit murder in his presence with perfect impunity. He would not know the killer from the killed.

Of course this does not happen every day; or rather opportunities of so striking a character do not often fall in his way, or doubtless he would not fail to make the most of them. Of the smaller occasions, which can occur more frequently, he is pretty sure to take advantage; and, from the time of his putting on two different coloured stockings, when getting up in the morning, to that of his assuming his wife's laced nightcap on going to bed, his every-day's history is one perpetual series of blunders and mistakes.

He will salt his tea, for instance, at breakfast-time, and put sugar on his muffin, and swallow both messes without the slightest perception of his having at all deviated from the common mode of applying those relishing condiments. With respect to the quality of his food, indeed, he is as indifferent as Dominie Sampson; and he has been known to fill his glass with vinegar instead of sherry, and to pour a ladle of turtle-soup over his turbot instead of lobster-sauce; and doubtless would have taken both the eatables and drinkables very quietly, had not his old butler, on the watch against such occurrences, whisked both glass and plate away with the celerity of Sancho's physician, Don ——— Bless me! I have forgotten that name also! I said that this subject was contagious—Don ————he who officiated in the island of Barataria—Don——No, Doctor Pedro Reio de Agüero, that is the title to which the gentleman answers:—Well, the vinegar would have been drunken, and the turbot

and turtle-sauce eaten, had not the vigilant butler played the part of Don Pedro Reio, and whipped off the whole concern, whilst the good man, his master, sat in dubious meditation, wondering what had become of his dinner, and not quite certain that he might not have eaten it, until a plateful of more salubrious and less incongruous viands—ham and chicken, for instance, or roast beef and French beans—was placed before him, and settled the question. But for that inestimable butler, a coroner's inquest would have been held upon him long ago.

After breakfast he would dress, thrice happy if the care of his valet protected him from shaving with a pruning-knife, or putting on his waistcoat wrong side out: being dressed, he would prepare for his morning ride, mounting, if his groom did not happen to be waiting, the very first four-footed animal that came in his way, sometimes the butcher's horse, with a tray nicely balanced before—sometimes the postboy's donkey, with the letter-bags swinging behind—sometimes his daughter's pony, side-saddle notwithstanding; and, when mounted, forth he sallies, rather in the direction which his steed may happen to prefer than in that which he himself had intended to follow.

Bold would be the pen that should attempt even a brief summary of the mistakes committed in one single morning's ride. If he proceed, as he frequently does, to our good town of Belford, he goes for wrong things, to the wrong shops; miscalls the people whom he accosts (seldom, indeed, shall he hit on the proper name, title, or vocation, of any one whom he chances to address); asks an old bachelor after his wife, and an old maid after her children; and finally sums up a morning of blunders by going to the inn where he had not left his horse, and quietly stepping into some gig or phaeton prepared for another person. In a new neighbourhood this appropriation of other people's property might bring our hero into an awkward dilemma; but the man and his ways are well known in our parts; and, when the unlucky owner of the abstracted equipage arrives in a fury, and demands of the astounded ostler what has become of his carriage, one simple exclamation, "Mr. Coningsby, sir!" is at once felt by the aggrieved proprietor to be explanation enough.

Should morning-calls be the order of the day, he contrives to make a pretty comfortable confusion in that simple civility. First of all, he can hardly gallop along the king's highway without getting into a *démêlé* with the turnpike-keepers; sometimes riding quietly through a gate without paying the slightest attention to their demand for toll; at others, tossing them, without dreaming of stopping to receive the change, a shilling or a sovereign, as the case may be: for, although

great on the currency question—(have I not said that the gentleman is [or was] a county member?)—he is practically most happily ignorant of the current coin of the realm, and would hardly know gold from silver, if asked to distinguish between them.

Beggars (and he is very charitable) find their account also in this ignorance: he flings about crowns for penny-pieces, and half-sovereigns for sixpences, relieving the same set a dozen times over, and getting quit of a pocketful of money—(for though he have a purse, he seldom remembers to make use of it—luckily seldom—for if he do fill that gentlemanly net-work, he is sure to lose it, cash, bank-notes, and all)—in the course of a morning's ride.

Arrived at the place of his destination, the house at which he is to call, a new scene of confusion is pretty sure to arise. In the first place, it rarely happens that he does arrive at the veritable mansion to which his visit is intended. He is far more likely to ride to the wrong place, inquire of the bewildered footman for some name not his master's, and be finally ushered into a room full of strangers, persons whom he neither visits nor knows, who stare and wonder what brought him, whilst he, not very sure whether he ought to remember them, whether they be his acquaintances or not, stammers out an apology and marches off again.

Or he shall commit the reverse mistake, and riding to the right house, shall ask for the wrong people; or, finding the family out, he shall have forgotten his own name—I mean his name-tickets—and shall leave one from his wife's or daughter's card-case, taken up by that sort of accident which is to him second nature;—or he shall unite all these blunders, and leave at a house where he himself does not visit a card left at his own mansion by a third person, who is also unacquainted with the family to which so unconsciously that outward sign and token of acquaintanceship had travelled.

If in so simple a matter as morning visiting he contrived to produce such confusion, think how his genius must have expanded when so dangerous a weapon as a pen got into his hands! I question if he ever wrote a letter in his life without some blunder in the date, the address, the signature or the subject. He would indite an epistle to one person, direct it to another, and send it to a third, who could not conceive from whom it came, because he had forgotten to put his name at the bottom. But of the numerous perplexities to which he was in the habit of giving rise, franks were by very far the most frequent cause. Ticklish things are they even to the punctual and the careful; and to Mr. Coningsby the giving one quite perfectly right seemed an impossibility. There was the date to consider, the month, the day of

the month, the year—I have known him write the wrong century; then came the name, the place, the street, and number, if in London—if in the country, the town and county; then, lastly, his own name, which, for so simple an operation as it seems, he would contrive generally to omit, and some times to boggle with, now writing only his patronymic as if he were a peer, now only his Christian name as if a prince, and now an involution of initials that defied even the accurate eye of the clerks of the Post Office. Very, very few can have been the franks of his that escaped paying.

Of course his friends and acquaintances were forewarned, and escaped the scrape (for it is one) of making their correspondents pay triple postage. Bountiful as he was in his offers of service in this way, (and keeping no account of the numbers, he would just as readily give fifty as one,) none incurred the penalty save strangers and the unwary. I, for my own part, never received but one letter directed by him in my life, and in the address of that, the name—my name, the name of the person to whom the letter was written—was wanting. "Three Mile Cross," held the place usually occupied by "Miss Mitford."

"Three Mile Cross—
Reading,
Berks."

ran the direction. But as I happened to receive about twenty times as many letters, and especially franked letters, as all the good people of the "Cross" put together, the packet was sent first to me, by way of experiment; and as I recognised the seal of a dear friend and old correspondent, I felt no scruple in appropriating for once, like a Scottish laird, the style and title of the place where I reside. And I and the postmaster were right: the epistle was, as it happened, intended for me.

Notes would, in his hands, have been still more dangerous than letters; but from this peril he was generally saved by the caution of the two friends most anxious for his credit,—his wife and the old butler, who commonly contrived, the one to write the answers to all invitations or general billets that arrived in his house, the other to watch that none from him should pass without due scrutiny. Once, however, he escaped their surveillance; and the consequence was an adventure which, though very trifling, proved, in the first instance, so uncomfortable as to cause both his keepers to exert double vigilance for the future. Thus the story ran:—

A respectable, but not wealthy, clergyman had been appointed to a living about ten miles off—had married, and brought home his bride; and Mr. Coningsby, who, as county-member, called upon everybody within a still wider circuit, paid a visit in due form,

accompanied by a lady; who, (neither at the Mr. and House when the of a near from kee time after necessary hours, by of invita four fami Mr. Coni mas-time London v body's e beforehan according her invita From the But acci were to g and, taki had not amiable l ing to co mind to p nient seas The da been give young cou themselves hamlet of first of on beautiful ities of th hollowed mons whic the profou street of with the v on the sig very top w let, so ch deep retire the midet circumstan be: vast then near sloughs; insulated a the roads, that of dro Mrs. Ellis, the inconve up their mi good of th congratulat their snug dinner, on "The snow bridge broke horses coul

accompanied by, or rather accompanying his lady; which call having been duly returned (neither party being at home), was followed at the proper interval by an invitation for Mr. and Mrs. Ellis to dine at Coningsby House. The invitation was accepted; but, when the day arrived, the dangerous illness of a near relation prevented the young couple from keeping their engagement; and, some time after, the fair bride began to think it necessary to return the civilities of her neighbours, by giving her first dinner-party. Notes of invitation were despatched accordingly to four families of consequence, amongst them Mr. Coningsby's; but it was the busy Christmas-time, when, between family parties, and London visitors, and children's balls, everybody's evenings were bespoken for weeks beforehand; and from three of her friends, accordingly, she received answers declining her invitation, and pleading pre-engagements. From the Coningsbys, only, no note arrived. But accidentally Mr. Ellis heard that they were to go at Christmas on a distant visit, and, taking for granted that the invitation had not reached the worthy member or his amiable lady, Mrs. Ellis, instead of attempting to collect other friends, made up her mind to postpone her party to a more convenient season.

The day on which the dinner was to have been given proved so unfavourable that our young couple saw good cause to congratulate themselves on their resolution. The little hamlet of East Longford, amongst the prettiest of our North-of-Hampshire villages, so beautiful in the summer, from the irregularities of the ground, the deep woody lanes hollowed like water-courses, the wild commons which must be passed to reach it, and the profound seclusion of the one straggling street of cottages and cottage-like houses, with the vicarage, placed like a bird's-nest on the side of a steep hill, clothed to the very top with beech woods; this pretty hamlet, so charming in its summer verdure; its deep retirement, and its touch of wildness in the midst of civilization, was from those very circumstances no tempting spot in mid-winter: vast tracts across the commons were then nearly impassable; the lanes were sloughs; and the village itself, rendered insulated and inaccessible by the badness of the roads, conveyed no other feeling than that of dreariness and loneliness. Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, who, although not insensible of the inconveniences of their abode, had made up their minds to bear the evil and enjoy the good of their situation, could not yet help congratulating themselves, as they sat in their snug dining parlour, after a five o'clock dinner, on the postponement of their party. "The snow is above a foot deep, and the bridge broken, so that neither servants nor horses could have got to the Eight Bells;

and where could we have housed them?" said the gentleman. "And the drawing-room smokes so, in this heavy atmosphere, that we cannot light a fire there," responded the lady. "Never, to be sure, was anything so fortunate!"

And, just as the word was spoken, a carriage and four drove up to the door, and exactly at half-past six (the hour named in the invitation) Mr. and Mrs. Coningsby were ushered into the room.

Imagine the feelings of four persons who had never met before in such a situation—especially of the two ladies. Mrs. Ellis, dinner over, with the consciousness of the half bottle of port and the quarter of sherry, the apples, the nuts, the single pair of mould candles, her drawing-room fire that could not be lighted, her dinner to provide as well as to cook, and her own dark merino and black silk apron! Poor Mrs. Coningsby, on the other hand, seeing at a glance how the case stood, feeling for the trouble that they were giving, and sinking under a consciousness far worse to bear than Mrs. Ellis's—the consciousness of being overdressed,—how heartily did she wish herself at home again! or, if that were too much to desire, what would she have given to have replaced her claret-coloured satin gown, her hat with its white plumes, her pearls and her rubies, back again in their wardrobes and cases.

It was a trial of no ordinary nature to the good sense, good breeding, and good humour of both parties; and each stood it well. There happened to be a cold round of beef in the house, some undressed game, and plenty of milk and eggs; the next farmer had killed a pig; and, with pork chops, cold beef, a pheasant, and apple fritters, all very nicely prepared, more fastidious persons than Mr. and Mrs. Coningsby might have made a good dinner. The host brought out his best claret; the pretty hostess regained her smiles, and forgot her black apron and her dark merino; and, what was a far more difficult achievement, the fair visitor forgot her plumes and her satin. The evening, which began so inauspiciously, ended pleasantly and sociably; and, when the note (taken, as was guessed, by our hero from the letter-boy, with the intention of sending it by a groom) was found quietly ensconced in his waistcoat pocket, Mrs. Coningsby could hardly regret the termination of her present adventure, although fully resolved never again to incur a similar danger.

Abbotsford and Newstead.

MISCELLANIES, No. 2.

By the Author of the "Sketch Book."

[This is the *sequitur* of "the Prairies," noticed at page 196 of the present volume; and fitly does it grace the lists of the season. Its contents are reminiscences of Washing-

ten Irving's visit to Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, in 1816, when the poet and novelist was in the gale of his glory. Accompanying these recollections are those of a short stay at Newstead Abbey, some years after its lord had quitted "that quaint and romantic pile." The volume although brief abounds with writing of too precious and inviting a character to enable us to comprise our view of its beauties within the present page; so that we shall now make but one extract, and return to this pleasant volume in a succeeding sheet.]

Character of Sir Walter Scott.

The conversation of Scott was frank, hearty, picturesque, and dramatic. A vein of strong, shrewd, common sense ran throughout it, as it does throughout all his writings, but was enriched and enlivened by incessant touches of feeling, of fancy, and humour. I have not done justice to the copious flow of grave thought that often mingled in his conversation, for at this distance of time, little remains in my memory but salient points and light, whimsical, and characteristic anecdotes. Indeed, during the whole time of my visit, he seemed in a lively, playful mood, and his remarks and stories inclined to the comic rather than grave. Such, however, I was told, was the usual habit of his mind in social intercourse. He relished a joke, or a trait of humour, and laughed with right good will.

Scott never talked for effect or display, but from the flow of his spirits, the stores of his memory, and the vigour of his imagination. He had a natural turn for narration; and his narratives and descriptions were without effort, yet wonderfully graphic. He placed the scene before you like a picture; he gave the dialogue with the appropriate dialect or peculiarities, and described the appearance and characters of his personages with that spirit and felicity evinced in his writings. Indeed, his conversations reminded me continually of his novels, and it seemed to me that, during the time I was with him, he talked enough to fill volumes, and that they could not have been filled more delightfully.

He was as good a listener as talker, appreciated every thing that others said, however humble might be their rank and pretensions, and was quick to testify his perception of any point in their discourse. He arrogated nothing to himself, but was perfectly unassuming and unpretending; entering with heart and soul into the business, or pleasure, or, I had almost said, folly, of the hour and the company. No one's concerns, no one's thoughts and opinions, no one's tastes and pleasures, seemed beneath him. He made himself so thoroughly the companion of those with whom he happened to be, that they forgot, for a time, his vast superiority, and only recollected, and wondered, when all was

over, that it was Scott with whom they had been on such familiar terms, and in whose society they had felt so perfectly at their ease.

It was delightful to observe the generous mode in which he spoke of all his literary contemporaries; quoting the beauties of their works and pointing out their merits; and this, too, with respect to persons with whom he might have been supposed to be at variance in literature or politics. Jeffrey, it was thought, had ruffled his plumes in one of his reviews, yet Scott spoke of him in terms of high and warm eulogy, both as an author and as a man.

His humour in conversation, as in his works, was genial, and free from all causticity. He had a quick perception of faults and foibles, but he looked upon poor human nature with an indulgent eye, relishing what was good and pleasant, tolerating what was frail, and pitying what was evil. It is this benignant spirit which gives such an air of *bonhomie* to Scott's humour throughout all his works. He played with the foibles and errors of his fellow-beings; and presented them in a thousand whimsical and characteristic lights; but the kindness and generosity of his nature tempered the sharpness of his wit, and would not allow him to be a satirist. I do not recollect a sneer throughout his conversation, any more than throughout his works.

Such is a rough sketch of Scott as I saw him in private life, not merely at the visit here narrated, but in the casual intercourse of subsequent years. Of his public character and merits all the world can judge. His works have incorporated themselves with the thoughts and concerns of the whole civilized world, for a quarter of a century, and have had a controlling influence over the age in which he lived. But when did human being ever exercise an influence more salutary and benignant? Who is there that, on looking back over a great portion of his life, does not find the genius of Scott administering to his pleasures, beguiling his cares, and soothing his lonely sorrows? Who does not still guard his works as a treasury of pure enjoyment, an armoury to which to resort in time of need, to find weapons with which to fight off the evils and griefs of life? For my own part, in periods of dejection, when everything around me was joyless, I have hailed the announcement of a new work from his pen, as an earnest of certain pleasure in store for me, and have looked forward to it as a traveller on a waste looks to a green spot at a distance, where he feels assured of solace and refreshment.

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